



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
P.O. Box 45010, Olympia, Washington 98504-5010

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Statement on mental health funding in Spokane County

Action by Gov. Christine Gregoire and the Legislature earlier this year prevented the collapse of much of the state's system for providing services to thousands of the state's poorest people suffering from mental illnesses.

The federal government slashed more than \$80 million over the two-year budget cycle – approximately \$40 million per year – from the budgets of Washington state's 14 Regional Support Networks (RSNs). These are county-operated organizations that make independent decisions about serving people with mental illnesses in their counties.

To minimize the effects of the federal cut, the Governor's office and the Legislature worked together during the last session to provide \$75.4 million for the biennium from the state's already strained general fund. That amounts to approximately \$37.7 million per year in new state funding for community mental health programs around the state.

Some RSNs did not receive hoped-for allocations and increases, but in the wake of enormous federal cuts, the state responded with an allocation process that ensures all of the RSNs can remain in business to support mentally ill people who have no where else to go.

If the state had not replaced the federal Medicaid cut, the Spokane RSN would have lost \$1.3 million for mental health services in the 2006-7 biennium – approximately \$650,000 per year. Instead, it will receive an increase in overall funding.

With the new state funds, Spokane area is forecast to receive \$32.2 million in fiscal 2006, which is \$525,000 more than the 2005 forecast for Spokane RSN.

The state does not make local funding decisions for mental health services. Those decisions are made by the Regional Support Networks. Within the limitations of federal and state legal requirements, the RSNs decide which local programs to fund and how much funding each will receive.

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